

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### A. Objectives

In order to assist DelDOT's project planning and analysis of alternatives, the objectives of the present study are to identify historical resources located within the area of potential effect (APE) for the proposed improvement and to evaluate the eligibility of those resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The level of survey combined Phase I (Background Research and Location/Identification) and Phase II (Evaluation) studies. Investigators undertook research sufficient for the development of a historic context following the guidelines of the *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Ames et al. 1989) and its associated context documents. The APE consisted of properties immediately adjacent to the proposed undertaking along Smiths Bridge Road.

#### B. Methods

The methodology for the present study involved background research, to provide data for the development of a historic context, and fieldwork, to carry out the identification and documentation of historic resources in the APE. Following research and fieldwork activities, National Register eligibility evaluations were undertaken utilizing the criteria developed by the historic context.

Background research activities entailed an examination of materials at various repositories. Researchers examined Delaware SHPO survey files and obtained copies of previously completed CRS and National Register forms for historical resources identified within the APE. Historic contexts and other historical information describing the development of the project area were also inspected at the Delaware SHPO. Further research at the Hagley Library near Greenville, Delaware, resulted in the gathering of copies of historical maps and insurance surveys depicting the project area. Tax parcel and land ownership information were collected by Berger staff at the New Castle County Department of Land Use. Berger staff conducted additional historical research at the University of Delaware Morris Library in Newark, Delaware.

Fieldwork consisted of vehicular and pedestrian survey of the project area to identify historic resources meeting the National Register's 50-year age criterion. Based upon the resource's architectural style, building materials, and form, surveyors noted the location of 50-year-old resources on project area maps. Subsequent comparison with historical map views confirmed the age of these resources. Fieldworkers also attempted to identify resources younger than 50 years that may have attained significance within that period and meet one of the criteria exceptions. Field documentation of newly identified historic resources involved collecting architectural information for the completion of CRS forms and for evaluating the resource's National Register eligibility, and photographing the resources as per the survey guidelines of the Delaware SHPO.

In compliance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations implementing Section 106 (36 CFR 800), and the guidelines of "Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines" (U.S. Department of the Interior 1983) and the Delaware SHPO's *Architectural and Archaeological Surveys in Delaware* (Delaware SHPO 1993), this investigation used historic contexts to evaluate the National Register eligibility of the identified historic resources. The levels of integrity and significance outlined by the contexts were applied to the resources documented during fieldwork and to their historical significance as ascertained during research to determine whether the resource met the National Register criteria.

### **C. Expected Results**

Based upon the results of the historical research, and the project area's location within a historic agricultural area of the Piedmont region that was transformed into a neighborhood of estates during the era of the country house movement, it was anticipated that surveyors would encounter a landscape characterized by its association with estates created by wealthy people during the early to mid-twentieth century. It was expected that estate complexes would include a substantial number of houses and outbuildings that dated before the estate period, along with buildings and structures created for the estates. It was also expected that a limited number of post-1950 dwellings would be present.